

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 231604Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9076

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 15034

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, IN

SUBJ: SOVIET-INDIAN RELATIONS: CHAVAN'S VISIT

REF: NEW DELHI 13051

1. SUMMARY. INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CHANVAN'S TWO RECENT TRANSIT STOPS IN MOSCOW (SEPT 3 AND 9) PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ONE MEETING AND A LUNCHEON WITH GROMYKO, BUT LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE, REPORTEDLY WAS DISCUSSED. A SOVIET OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE SOVIET DELEGATION TO DISCUSS THE RUPEE-RUBLE PROBLEM IS NOW SCHEDULED TO GO TO NEW DELHI IN ABOUT MID-OCTOBER. THE PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR SPECULATED THAT CHAVAN'S VISIT WAS INTENDED TO IMPLY INDIAN SUPPORT FOR SOVIET POSITIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES WITHOUT ACTUALLY ADDING SUBSTANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF CALLED ON YURIY FILIPPOV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE MFA'S SOUTH ASIA DIVISION ON SEPT 22 TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH ASIA IN RECENT MONTHS, INCLUDING SOVIET-INDIAN RELATIONS AND CHAVAN'S VISIT EARLIER THIS MONTH.

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3. FILIPPOV, WHO HAD DEFERRED EARLIER REQUESTS FOR AN APPOINTMENT, SAID THAT THE CHAVAN VISIT HAD BEEN VERY BRIEF AND THAT THE TALKS HAD COVERED ONLY TWO GENERAL TOPICS: THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE AND THE FORTHCOMING UNGA. ON COLOMBO, FILIPPOV SAID THAT THE SOVIETS TOLD CHAVAN THAT THEY WERE PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE AND WITH INDIA'S ROLE, INCLUDING MRS. GANDHI'S SPEECH. ON THE UNGA, HE SAID THAT THE TWO SIDES HAD GONE OVER THE EXPECTED AGENDA, PARTICULARLY THOSE ITEMS DEALING WITH DISARMAMENT. FILIPPOV WAS NOT SPECIFIC.

4. TO EMBOFF'S QUESTION ON THE RUPEE-RUBLE ISSUE, FILIPPOV SAID THAT IT HAD NOT COME UP WITH CHAVAN OR WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI IN JUNE, SINCE ITS IMPORTANCE WAS NOT THAT GREAT AND IT WAS BEING HANDLED AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL. WHEN EMBOFF QUESTIONED WHETHER IT WAS REALLY SUCH A MINOR MATTER, IN VIEW OF THE LEVEL OF SOVIET-INDIAN EXCHANGES, FILIPPOV SAID THAT INDEED THE AMOUNT OF MONEY INVOLVED WAS CONSIDERABLE. BUT THE TWO SIDES WERE NOT FAR APART, HE CONTINUED. IT WAS NOT A MATTER OF GOING BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF THE SOVIET-INDIAN ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP, BUT OF FINDING ANEQUITABLE ADJUSTMENT TO COVER CURRENT AND FUTURE DEALINGS. FILIPPOV ADDED THAT HE "EXPECTED" AN AGREEMENT TO BE REACHED SOON, PROBABLY IN THE NEXT ROUND OF TALKS. A SOVIET DELEGATION WOULD BE GOING TO NEW DELHI IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS--PROBABLY BY THE MIDDLE OF OCTOBER, HE SAID. (COMMENT. AT THE TIME OF MRS. GANDHI'S VISIT IN JUNE, INDIAN EMBOFFS EXPECTED THIS DELEGATION TO GO TO INDIA WITHIN ABOUT TWO MONTHS, I.E., BY MID-AUGUST. MORE RECENTLY WE HEARD THAT THE DELEGATION WOULD LEAVE IN MID-SEPT. NOW IT HAS APPARENTLY BEEN DELAYED FURTHER, SUGGESTING THAT AGREEMENT MAY NOT BE AS CLOSE AS FILIPPOV CLAIMS.)

5. INDIAN EMBOFF SRINIVASAN TOLD A JAPANESE COLLEAGUE THAT CHAVAN'S MEETING WITH GROMYKO LASTED ABOUT 75 MINUTES AND THAT THE LUNCH LASTED SOMEWHAT OVER TWO HOURS. EVEN THIS SHORT TIME WAS FURTHER REDUCED BY

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THE NEED FOR TRANSLATION, SAID SRINIVASAN. HE NOTED THAT COLOMBO AND THE UNGA WERE THE MAIN TOPICS, BUT SAID THAT THE DISCUSSION WAS NECESSARILY SUPERFICIAL. ON HIS RETURN TRIP, CHAVAN DID NOT MEET WITH ANY SOVIETS, ACCORDING TO SRINIVASAN.

6. PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR HYDER TOLD EMBOFF ON SEPT 20 THAT HE THOUGHT CHAVAN'S PURPOSE WAS TO IMPLY

SUPPORT FOR MOSCOW BY VISITING ITS CLOSEST SATELLITE, MONGOLIA. IN THIS WAY, SAID HYDER, THE INDIANS COULD SEEM TO BE HONORING MONGOLIA AND LISTENING TO ITS VIEWS ON ASIAN QUESTIONS, INCLUDING MOSCOW'S PET SCHEME OF ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY (ACS). WHEN EMBOFF EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT INDIA WOULD BUY ON TO ACS OR ACT TO PROMOTE MOSCOW'S SCHEME, HYDER AGREED, ADDING THAT "THE INDIANS ARE VERY CLEVER." THE POINT, HE SAID, WAS THAT INDIA WOULD NOT ACTUALLY CHANGE ITS POSITION, BUT WOULD GAIN FAVOR IN SOVIET EYES BY SIMPLY LISTENING TO THE MONGOLIANS.

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